

NORTH DAKOTA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL
QUARTERLY MEETING
Wednesday, July 22, 2020
10 a.m. – 4 p.m., Central Time
Virtual Meeting

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Jodi Webb, Teresa Larsen, Trevor Vannett, Robyn Throlson, Renee Speidel-Wetzsteon, Cathy Quintane, Gillian Plenty Chief, Terry Peterson, Bruce Murry, Joseph Hall, Gerry Teevens, Russ Cusack, Tina Bay, Brandy Johnson

Members Absent: Jason Sutheimer, Matt McCleary, Shannon Cook, Marshall Longie, Uma Hoffman

Others Present: none

Joe Hall called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. A quorum was present.

Action: A motion to approve the agenda was made by Renee Speidel-Wetzsteon and seconded by Bruce Murry. Motion carried.

Action: A motion to approve the January 2020 minutes was made by Gerry Teevens and seconded by Terry Peterson. Motion carried.

DVR Region V Update – Curt Markel

An overview of the business climate in Fargo and Wahpeton was given. All counselors are assigned to work with transition students. They serve 22 high schools 2 Pre-ETS contracts.

Goals: Applicants – Currently 254, goal being 360 = 71% of goal
Plans/Service – Currently 196, goal being 265 = 74% of goal
Employed – Currently 102, goal being 128 = 80% of goal
Current average caseload is 55

DVR Regional VIII Update – Becki Hoff

Region VIII serves the 8 counties in southwestern North Dakota. They are fully staffed right now. The office has been open to the public for about one month. Clients are seen by appointment only, while maintaining ND restart guidelines. An overview was given on the Business climate and economy. The region serves 3 schools in Dickinson and 12 in the outlying area with 11% of the caseload being transition students. There is one Pre-Employment Transition Service contract through Dickinson High School.

Goals: Applicants - Currently 50, goal being 60
Plans/Service - Currently 37, goal being 42
Pre-ETS hours – Currently 74.56%, goal being 850 hours
Exceeded goals related to Employer contacts

VR Director Update – Robyn Throlson

VR offices across the state were directed to start telecommuting in March and offices were closed to the public. VR staff were successful in providing assessments that could be administered remotely, continued intakes and client contacts virtually, connected clients to “virtual job shadows,” etc. Offices are now open by appointment only and with 50% staffing to manage social distancing and follow ND re-start guidelines. Plexiglass shields are up in the front areas of each office and masks are required. Vision specialists have been contacting clients via phone and are prepared for follow up with in person visits if clients are interested. They have implemented even more robust guidelines for home visits than the ND Re-start guidelines.

Seeing a bit of a decrease in applicants and plans, however, this is a common problem across the country. Meeting closure goals and the 15% Pre-ETS requirement. Business services cont. to provide service and are at 99% of their goal. Preparing for a potential increase in applicants, former clients who may have been laid off due to COVID as well individuals who may have acquired a disability/have long term effects due to COVID.

The Department has indicated a 15% budget cut. VR is preparing the budget for the next biennium now.

The VR annual training will be virtual and done in “chunked” times rather than 2 full days.

State plan was approved by RSA and will be available on the VR website soon.

VR requested the League of Cities to disseminate a letter relating to parking fee revenue. The letter was held due to COVID; however, it has since been sent out.

CAP report -Teresa Larsen

Teresa explained what the Client Assistance Program does and that it is funded by VR dollars. The most common area of disagreement was what VR services would or would not provide, and counselors responding to phone calls in a timelier manner. Cases have become more complicated. Cynthia Goulet is the CAP representative/contact person for the program.

Appeals report - Louann Nider

No appeals this year

2021 Virtual meeting Dates

January 20	8:30a.m.-12:30 p.m. CST
April 21	10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. CST
July 21	10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. CST
October 20	10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. CST

Tribal Updates – No one present to give Tribal Updates

Committee Break Outs – Joe Hall assigned the newer SRC members to a sub-committee

Cathy Quintane -Membership

Russ Cusack – Planning/Evaluation
Brandy Johnson-Resource

Committee Chair Reports

Planning/Evaluation Committee – Robyn Throlson

Teresa Larsen reviewed the Vocational Rehabilitation Strategic Plan Performance Measures.

Action: The committee brought forward to the full SRC a Conflict of Interest Policy. A motion was made by the Planning/Evaluation Committee to approve the Conflict of Interest Policy and seconded by Gerry Teevens. Motion carried.

Action: The committee brought forward to the full SRC a Hearing Aid Policy. A motion was made by Teresa Larsen to approve the Hearing Aid Policy and seconded by Bruce Murry. Motion carried.

Resource Committee – Jason Sutheimer, Chair - Did not meet.

Employment Committee – Bruce Murry

The committee would like to have a representative from the local APSE present at SRC in the future to discuss aligning advocacy efforts. Discussion around possible disproportionate impact of COVID upon those with disabilities. Individuals affected by COVID - next steps in terms of employment. Determine next steps with the legislature regarding the tax incentive. Need for more rural providers- new provider in Grafton. Behavioral Health is working on an MOU with VR and DD. Need to set benchmarks for improving community employment outcomes and services for individuals with disabilities.

Membership/Public Relations Committee – Joe Hall, Chair (The committee Chair requested Committee Liaison, Barb Burghart, to lead the meeting in his absence).

Barb Burghart and Joe Hall facilitated Orientation to new members this week. Bruce Klootwyk resigned from the SRC. He was the representative for “Current or former Applicant or Recipient of VR. Renee Speidel-Wetzsteon and Cathy Quintane have two people they will be contacting to potentially replace this representative. Our disability percentage for the full Council is 53%

Public Comment - There was no one present from the public for comment.

**Next meeting - October 21, 2020 via TEAMS
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. CST**

Action: A motion was made by Bruce Murry and seconded by Gillian Plenty Chief to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.